EDL and ATLAS

Intelligent Mail & Address Quality

Enhanced Label Ordering and Tracking

To streamline the label ordering process and uniquely identify trays, tubs, and sacks of mail throughout the USPS mail processing and transportation network, we will soon introduce the Enhanced Distribution Label (EDL) and Automated Tray Label Assignment System (ATLAS). EDL and ATLAS will give mailers increased visibility into the mailstream.

What is EDL?

EDL is a new label format that assigns a unique barcode to each tray, tub, and sack. EDL-formatted labels identify the originator of each handling unit and eliminate the need for mailers to create their own unique barcode.

Currently, USPS uses generic, 10-digit barcodes to identify trays, tubs, and sacks. Our goal is to move to a new information-rich 24-digit barcode (see Fig. 1). During our transition period to the new 24-digit barcode label we will include both the current 10-digit barcode and the new 24-digit barcode on the label (see Fig. 2). The 10-digit barcode will be removed when USPS's infrastructure is in place to read the 24-digit barcode.

Fig. 1: Label with a 24-Digit Barcode

Fig. 2: Label with 10- and 24-Digit Barcodes

The current 10-digit Postal routing barcode includes:

- The ZIP code of the container's destination
- The container's contents based on the 3-digit Content Identifier Numbers (CIN) listed in the latest release of the USPS DMM
- The Day of Delivery (Only "0" is allowed for mailers)
- The Mail Processing Code (MPC)

The new 24-digit barcode will include:

- The ZIP code of the container's destination
- The container's contents based on the 3-digit Content Identifier Numbers (CIN) listed in the latest release of the USPS DMM
- The Label Source, which identifies the system or facility that generated the label
- The unique Business Entity ID (BEI) [same BEI as used by other visibility-related programs]
- An Optional Program Field
- A unique Serial Number
- The Label Type, which designates a specific mail flow

What is ATLAS?

ATLAS, a replacement for the USPS' current PASSPORT label production system, coordinates all activities involved with the creation, distribution, printing, and maintenance of the new labels. ATLAS will allow mailers to produce labels and/or submit label orders online. They will also be able to save and reuse orders as well as track active orders. Customers will still have the option to create, print, and order labels from the Material Distribution Center at Topeka, KS.

What does this Mean to Mailers?

EDL and ATLAS will improve the way that mailers do business with USPS by providing online label production and ordering capabilities and by uniquely identifying trays, tubs, and sacks throughout the mailstream.

Timeline for Roll-out of EDL/ATLAS

The initial rollout of ATLAS to 131 Postal facilities was completed in FY 2005. An additional 330 Postal facilities will be implemented in 2006. After an introductory phase-in period (to be determined), the use of the new EDL formatted labels will be offered to our external customers. The initial offering will be limited to the transitional 10/24-digit label format.